

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 CU-02 AGR-05 OES-06 HEW-04

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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8421

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NY

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 COTONOU 0709

MONTREAL FOR ICAO, PARIS FOR UNESCO, ROME FOR FODAG,
VIENNA FOR IAEA AND UNIDO

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: UNDP, EAID, ECRP, DM

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SUMMARY: THE UNDP PROGRAM IN BENIN CONTINUES TO BE EFFECTIVELY
ADMINISTERED, BUT IS HAMPERED BY THE INEFFICIENCY AND LACK OF
COOPERATION BY THE GOVT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN
(BPRB). THE EFFECT OF THE NEW FINANCIAL RESTRAINTS PROVIDED
BY THE UNDP LIQUIDITY CRISIS REMAINS AN OPEN QUESTION WITH THE
ABSENCE OF ANY GPRB RESPONSE TO THE SITUATION. END SUMMMARY

1. ROLE OF UNDP IN UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM. UNDP RESIDENT
REP JUAN BLANCH-SOLER (SPANISH) ARRIVED IN BENIN JAN 75. SINCE
THAT TIME HE HAS PROVES HIMSELF TO BE AN ABLE AND IMAGINATIVE
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ADMINISTRATOR, AS WELL AS A CAPABLE DIPLOMAT. HE HAS MANAGED TO

SECURE THE CONFIDENCE OF IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE GPRB'S MILITARY LEADERSHIP, WHO ARE OFTEN MISTRUSTFUL OF WESTERNERS. HIS ADVICE HAS BEEN SOUGHT BY THE GPRB CIVIL SERVANTS IN PRACTICALLY ALL AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, AS WELL AS IN AREAS OUTSIDE HIS NORMAL RANGE OF ACTIVITIES (I.E. POLITICAL STANDS TAKEN BY BENIN IN THE UN). IT IS NOT, HOWEVER, USUALLY FOLLOWED.

2. AS THE PLANNING MACHINERY OF THE GPRB IS QUITE INEFFECTIVE, THE NEED FOR INTERNAL SUPERVISION AND COORDINATION IN THE UNDP MISSION IS GREAT. THIS NEED HAS BEEN EFFECTIVELY MET BY THE RESREP. THE UNDP RESREP HAS UNDER HIS PURVIEW ALL UN ACTIVITIES OF A PERMANENT NATURE IN BENIN, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE WHO PROGRAM, WHICH HAS A SEPARATE RESIDENT REP. THERE HAVE BEEN NO PROBLEMS OF COORDINATION BETWEEN THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS IN BENIN.

3. RESREP'S PREVIOUS ASSIGNMENT WAS AN EIGHT YEAR STINT IN UNDP HEADQUARTERS IN NYORK. HE HAS MAINTAINED EFFECTIVE RELATIONS WITH THE CENTRAL OFFICE DURING HIS ASSIGNMENT HERE. A GREATER POTENTIAL FOR POOR COORDINATION EXISTS BETWEEN REGIONAL OFFICES OF SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND UNDP LEADERSHIP HERE, THOUGH NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS HAVE YET BEEN ENCOUNTERED. FOR EXAMPLE, THE UNIDO REGIONAL OFFICE IN OUAGADOUGOU, WHICH IS CHARGED WITH SUPERVISING UNIDO ACTIVITIES IN NINE AFRICAN COUNTRIES, IS ONLY MODERATELY FAMILIAR WITH THE PROGRAM IN BENIN. THE FAO RESREP, ALSO IN CHARGE OF FAO IN TOGO, IS CURRENTLY UNDER THE UNDP UMBRELLA IN BENIN. IN NEXT FISCAL YEAR HE WILL BECOME COMPLETELY AUTONOMOUS. NO PROBLEMS ARE EXPECTED OWING TO THE EXCELLENT PERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO RESREPS.

4. UNDP/IBRD. COORDINATION CONTINUES ON AN EFFECTIVE INFORMAL BASIS. THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS ARE WORKING TOGETHER CLOSELY ON A TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER, FOR WHICH IBRD WILL MAKE THE CAPITAL OUTLAYS, AND UNDP WILL COORDINATE THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

5. BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUED INABILITY OF THE GPRB TO MANAGE AND COORDINATE ITS DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT COORDINATION OF UN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN BENIN BE

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MAINTAINED THROUGH AN INTEGRATED STRUCTURE. GREATER AUTONOMY FOR SPECIALIZED AGENCIES COULD CREATE A SITUATION OF CROSSED PRIORITIES AND MIXED SIGNALS SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH EXISTS WITHIN THE GPRB. IN PREVIOUS YEARS, A PROPOSAL THAT UNDP RESREP BE MADE THE REP OF THE UN SEC GEN HAS BEEN DISCUSSED IN THE UNDP GOVERNING COUNCIL. IF GREATER AUTONOMY FOR THE UNSPECIALIZED AGENCIES IS TO BE PURSUED, WE FEEL THAT THIS PROPOSAL DESERVES FURTHER ATTENTION.

6. NO FORMAL COORDINATION SYSTEM HAS BEEN DEVELOPED AMONG THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE DONORS FOR BENIN. THE MIN OF PLAN MAINTAINS AN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL AID, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT ANY COORDINATING IS DONE. THE ANNUAL REPORT PUBLISHED BY THE UNDP RESREP IS MAINLY AN AFTER-THE-FACT COMPENDIUM OF DESCRIPTIONS OF PROJECTS IN PROGRESS. PROPOSED PROJECTS ARE SCARCELY TOUCHED ON. PROJECTS IN PREVIOUS YEARS TO DEVELOP SUCH COORDINATING PROCESS HAVE FAILED PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF GPRB OPPOSITION.

7. IN THE LIGHT OF THE FAILURE OF THESE PROJECTS AND THE APPARENT UNWILLINGNESS OF THE GPRB TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY SUCH COORDINATING PROCESS, THE UNDP LEADERSHIP HAS STRENGTHENED ITS EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN INFORMAL LINES OF COMMUNICATION AMONG THE DONOR COUNTRIES. THERE HAS BEEN NO DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS SIMILAR TO THOSE WHICH OCCURRED IN THE LAST REPORTING PERIOD (REF B). ONE-TO-ONE CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE UNDP AND WESTERN DONORS ARE FREQUENT, IF NOT COMPLETELY THOROUGH. THE PRC AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES ARE CONTACTED ON A LESS-FREQUENT BASIS. THEIR REPS ARE MADE AWARE OF UNDP PROJECTS, BUT ARE NOT FORTHCOMING ON THEIR AID OPERATIONS.

8. THE UNDP HAS MADE EFFECTIVE USE OF WESTERN VOLUNTEER RESOURCES IN ITS VARIOUS PROGRAMS. FRENCH VOLUNTEERS ARE ACTIVE IN THE UNDP/UNESCO EDUCATION REFORM PROJECT. FRENCH, GERMAN AND AMERICAN PCV'S ARE ALSO PARTICIPATING IN UNDP-DIRECTED PROJECTS IN GEOLOGY, LIVESTOCK AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

9. FINANCIAL RESTRAINTS. THE AUSTERITY MEASURES EFFECTED IN LATE FALL 75 WILL CALL INTO PLAY THE ENTIRE UNDP/GPRB RELATIONSHIP. BENIN WAS UNDERPROGRAMMED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST

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FIVE YEAR CYCLE, PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF A LACK OF PRELIMINARY PLANNING BY THE THEN DAHOMEAN GOVT, AND THE INABILITY TO ESTABLISH PRIORITIES AT AN EARLY DATE. THROUGHOUT THIS CYCLE, THE GPRB HAS BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO ADDING PROJECTS ON A PIECE-MEAL BASIS AS THEY WERE DEVELOPED, BECAUSE THE EXPENDITURES CEILING HAS NEVER BEEN APPROACHED. HOWEVER, WITH THE NEW FINANCIAL RESTRAINTS, A CURTAILMENT OF THE UNDP'S PROGRAM IN BENIN BECAME NECESSARY. THE UNDP RESREP HAS SUBMITTED A PROPOSAL FOR SUCH CURTAILMENTS TO THE GPRB. THE BENINESE POSITION AS ANNOUNCED IN THE UN IS THAT BENIN, AS ONE OF THE 25 MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED COUNTRIES, SHOULD NOT BE SUBJECTED TO THE NEW RESTRAINTS. IF THE GPRB REFUSES TO ACCEPT THE RESREP'S PROPOSAL, OR TO DEVELOP ITS OWN RE-ORDERING OF PRIORITIES, EXPERTS WORKING IN THE UNDP'S PROGRAM WILL HAVE TO BE TERMINATED AS THEIR CONTRACTS EXPIRE WITH NO CON-

SIDERATION GIVEN AS TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PARTICULAR
EXPERT.
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 COTONOU 0709

MONTREAL FOR ICAO, PARIS FOR UNESCO, ROME FOR FODAG,
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10. THE SITUATION ENGENDERED BY THE FINANCIAL RESTRAINTS
WOULD LAST AS LONG AS THE RESTRAINTS WERE IN FORCE, CONCEIVABLY
THROUGH THE INITIAL STAGES OF THE SECOND FIVE YEAR CYCLE.
BECAUSE THIS SIUTATION IS SO UNCLEAR, AND THE GPRB HAS NO
DEVELOPMENT PLAN FROM WHICH THE UNDP CAN WORK, THE FORMULATION
OF A NEW UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAM FOR THE SECOND CYCLE HAS BEEN
POSTPONED UNTIL JUN 78. THE UNDP OPERATIONS IN BENIN WILL
CONTINUED ON AN AD-HOC BASIS UNTIL THAT TIME.

11. COUNTRY PROGRAMMING. AS MENTIONED ABOVE, THE DEVELOP-
MENT OF A NEW COUNTRY PROGRAM FOR BENIN HAS BEEN POSTPONED
UNTIL JUNE 78. THIS DECISION WAS MADE BY THE UNDP RESREP DUE

TO THE UNCERTAINTIES PROVOKED BY THE UNDP LIQUIDITY
CRISIS AND THE LACK OF ANY COMPREHENSIVE GPRB PLANNING DOCUMENT.
NO COUNTRY PROGRAM REVIEW FOR THE FIRST CYCLE HAS BEEN CARRIED
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OUT, AS THE GPRB IS UNWILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH AN EX-
ERCISE UNTIL IT HAS SET ITS DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES IN ORDER.
THE UNDP LEADERSHIP IS HOPEFUL THAT THE GPRB WILL BE ABLE
TO COME UP WITH SOME SORT OF PLANNING DOCUMENT SO THAT A COUNTRY
PROGRAM REVIEW CAN TAKE PLACE, BUT WITH THE CONSTANT SHIFT-
ING OF PERSONNEL WITH THE GPRB, THIS DOES NOT SEEM VERY LIKELY.

12. PROJECT EVALUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION. THE FIRST TRIPARTITE
PROJECT REVIEWS TO BE HELD IN BENIN WERE DONE IN THE LAST
FIVE MONTHS. ALL 12 UNDP/FAO PROJECTS WERE REVIEWED, AN
EXERCISE THAT WAS HIGHLY VALUED BY ALL THREE CONCERNED PARTIES.
ON THE BASIS OF THESE REVIEWS, PLANS WERE MADE TO CONSOLIDATE
THE 12 PROJECTS INTO EIGHT, SO AS TO FACILITATE MORE EFFIC-
IENT ADMINISTRATION AND LOWER EXPENSES. THE UNDP IS HOPE-
FUL THAT MORE TRIPARTITE REVIEWS WILL BE HELD IN THE FUTURE.

13. THE WEAKEST PROJECTS IN THE UNDP PROGRAM LINEUP ARE THOSE
THAT ARE MOST DEPENDENT ON GPRB COOPERATION AND ARE ON THE
FRINGES OF THE POLITICAL SPHERE. THE UNDP HAS HAD A HISTORY
OF FAILED PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING. CURRENTLY, THERE
ARE FOUR EXPERTS WORKING IN TWO PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANN-
ING. DUE TO GPRB IMPOSED WORKING CONDITIONS, THE EXPERTS HAVE
NOT BEEN ABLE TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY. THEY ARE DENIED NEEDED
INFORMATION BY THE GPRB ON THE GROUNDS THAT THIS INFORMATION
IS CLASSIFIED.

14. ONE OF THE WEAKEST PROJECTS, ASSISTANCE TO THE CENTER FOR
THE PROMOTION OF BENINESE ENTERPRISES, HAS BEEN ELIMINATED.
THOUGHT THE CENTER HAD BEEN DEFUNCT FOR MANY MONTHS, ITS DIR
TRANSFERRED, AND ITS BENINESE EMPLOYEES NOT PAID, THREE UNIDO
EXPERTS MAINTAINED THEIR POSITIONS AND MINIMAL OPERATIONS.
FINALLY, CONTRACTS FOR TWO OF THE EXPERTS WERE NOT RENEWED
AND THE THIRD WAS TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER PROJECT. THE UNDP
LOCAL HEADQUARTERS WAS NEVER OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED BY THE GPRB
THAT A DECISION HAD BEEN MADE TO ABANDON THE PROJECT, AND
THE TERMINATION OF THE TWO UNIDO EXPERTS AND TRANSFER OF THE
OTHER WAS DONE ENTIRELY AT THE UNDP'S INITIATIVE.

15. SUCCESSFUL UNDP PROJECTS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED IN AREAS WHICH
DO NOT DEPEND ON THE HIGH LEVEL GPRB COOPERATION. THIS WOULD
INCLUDE THE SIX MAN UNDP/UNOTC (UN OFFICE OF TECHNICAL COOP-
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ERATION) MINERAL RESEARCH PROJECT, WHICH WORKS OUT OF THE SERVICE OF MINES, AND WHICH RECENTLY DISCOVERED PHOSPHATES AND GOLD IN THE NORTHERN AREAS OF BENIN. ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL PORTION OF THE UNDP PROGRAM IS THE UNDP/FAO PROJECTS IN THE OUEME VALLEY DEVELOPMENT, THE AGRO-PEDOLOGY LABORATORY, AND LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL TRACTION.

16. APPRAISAL OF PROPOSED PROJECTS: ALTHOUGH EMBASSY MAINTAINS

A CLOSE WORKING RELATINSHIP WITH UNDP RESREP AND REPS OF SPECIALIZED UN AGENCIES, NO FORMAL SYSTEM OF APPRAISAL OF PROPOSED PROJECTS HAS BEEN PURSUED. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT IF PURSUED, THIS APPRAISAL PROCESS WOULD LEAVE THE UNDP OPEN TO CHARGES BY THE GPRB OF CONSPIRATORIAL COLLABORATION WITH THE US. SHOULD PROJECTS BE DISAPPROVED, THE GPRB WOULD BLAME THE US. FROM A TECHNICAL SIDE, WE QUESTION THE UTILITY OF TAKING ON THIS RESPONSIBILITY WITH ONLY ONE AID OFFICER AT POST. FOR AN EFFECTIVE APPRAISAL SYSTEM, POST WOULD HAVE TO DRAW ON THE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE OF REDSO, ABIDJAN AND AID/W. REQUEST FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS ON THE APPLICABILITY OF STATE A-1149 TO OUR SITUATION.

17. WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT. THE UNDP PROGRAM IN BENIN HAS YET TO MAKE ANY REAL IMPACT IN THIS AREA. A RURAL HOME ECONOMICS PROJECT HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY EXPANDED, BUT ESSENTIALLY REMAINS ONLY A SMALL PART OF LARGER UNDP PROGRAM IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. THE UNDP SPONSORED A SEMINAR WHICH DISCUSSED THE RESULTS OF THE MEXICO CITY CONF ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR, BUT THIS WAS OF ONLY MINOR SIGNIFICANCE. AT PRESENT THERE ARE ONLY TWO WOMEN WORKING IN EXPERT POSITIONS WITHIN THE UNDP STRUCTURE.

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